CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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LETTER DATED 29 JULY 1996 FROM THE HEAD OF THE DELEGATION OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT TRANSMITTING THE TEXT OF THE STATEMENT ISSUED ON 29 JULY 1996 BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA CONCERNING NUCLEAR TESTING

I have the honour to transmit to you a statement issued on 29 July 1996 by the Government of the People's Republic of China concerning nuclear testing.

I would be grateful if the text of this statement could be circulated as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament. Attached please find the Chinese text and the official translations in English, French, Spanish, Russian and Arabic.

(Signed) Sha Zukang
Ambassador for Disarmament Affairs
Head of the Delegation of the
People's Republic of China to the
Conference on Disarmament

STATEMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA
(29 July 1996)

On 29 July 1996, China successfully conducted a nuclear test. The Government of the People's Republic of China hereby solemnly declares that it will start a moratorium on nuclear testing effective from 30 July 1996. Such an important decision by China is not only a response to the appeal of the vast number of non-nuclear-weapon States, but also a concrete action to promote nuclear disarmament.

Over the past three decades and more since its first nuclear test on 16 October 1964, China has established a capable and effective nuclear self-defence force. In a pioneering spirit of self-reliance, sustaining hardship and personal sacrifices, a large number of Chinese workers, scientific and technical personnel, officers and soldiers of the People's Liberation Army, as well as all the staff working on the front of national defence have made strenuous efforts under extremely difficult conditions in the research, manufacture and development of China's nuclear weapons. Their indelible historical feats have greatly boosted the morale of the Chinese people and enhanced China's capability to safeguard peace. The Chinese Government and people wish to extend cordial greetings and pay high respect to them.

Adhering to its independent foreign policy of peace, China has always stood for the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons. Historical circumstances compelled China to develop nuclear weapons. For more than a century, the Chinese nation experienced untold sufferings and scourges of war inflicted upon by foreign aggressors. After the founding of new China, it was still subjected to the threat of war, including that of nuclear weapons. In order to survive and develop, China was left with no other alternative. Our development of a limited nuclear capability is not aimed at threatening other people, but is solely for self-defence with a view to maintaining independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and ensuring a peaceful life of the people. Moreover, our development of nuclear weapons is to safeguard world peace, counter nuclear blackmail and nuclear threat, prevent nuclear war and ultimately destroy all nuclear weapons.

Since the very first day when China came into possession of nuclear weapons, China has solemnly declared that at no time and under no circumstances will it be the first to use nuclear weapons. China has also undertaken unconditionally not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-weapon-free zones. China is the only nuclear-weapon State in the world that has made and abided by such commitments. China has never deployed nuclear weapons outside its border, nor has it ever used or threatened to use nuclear weapons against other countries.

China is a peace-loving country and an important force for the maintenance of world peace and stability. China is in favour of reaching a comprehensive ban on nuclear-weapon test explosions in the process towards the objective of complete nuclear disarmament. China has taken an active part in the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) negotiations in Geneva, and is striving for the conclusion, within this year and on consensus basis, of a

fair, reasonable and verifiable CTBT with universal adherence and unlimited duration. China is ready to work with other members of the international community to this end.

Halting nuclear test is an important step towards nuclear disarmament. In order to remove once and for all the threat of nuclear war hanging over mankind and achieve lasting peace and universal security throughout the world, the Chinese Government hereby appeals to all the countries, nuclear-weapon States in particular, for the following:

1. Major nuclear-weapon States should abandon their policy of nuclear deterrence. States with huge nuclear arsenals should continue to drastically reduce their nuclear stockpiles.

2. All nuclear-weapon States should undertake not to be the first to use nuclear weapons at any time and under any circumstances, commit themselves unconditionally not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-weapon-free zones, and conclude, at an early date, international legal instruments to such effect.

3. States with nuclear weapons deployed outside their borders should withdraw all these weapons home. All nuclear-weapon States should pledge their support to the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, respect their status as such and undertake corresponding obligations.

4. No country should develop and deploy space weapon systems or missile defence systems undermining strategic security and stability.

5. An international convention on the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons should be concluded through negotiations with the participation of all States.

To realize the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world and ensure the enjoyment of peace, security, stability and prosperity by all countries is the strong aspiration of all people. We sincerely hope that there should never be a nuclear war. We are convinced that with the concerted efforts of all peace-loving countries and people around the world, nuclear war is preventable. If mankind can produce nuclear weapons in the twentieth century, it can very well destroy such weapons in the twenty-first century. The Chinese Government and people are ready to join the Governments and people around the world for the realization of this lofty goal.